THE CONCEPTION AND BIRTH of SIN,

Delivered in two

SERMONS

Upon JAMES I. 15.

When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin.

BY

JOHN NOBLE Minister of *East-Retford* in the County of *Notingham*.

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CONCEPTION

AND

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SERMONS

Upon James I. 15.

Where that Text is considered, it is briefly

To the Right Honorable,
JOHN Earl of CLARE.

Right Honorable, and my very good Lord,

I Have been so many waies sensible of your gracious favours by me undeserved, as the utmost of my service can be no recompence, and your Lordships appearing of these Sermons when you heard them preached, as it might be a sufficient invitation to put them to the Press, so it justly challenges the Dedication: besides the subjects matter of them being an enemy to sin, where should they look for sanctuary but in a person of goodness? whose hatred to sin appears daily by your prudent regulating of your self and family in the waies of Virtue and Religion. Every man is apt to profess himself an enemy unto sin in his words, but if we examine their actions, there are too few to be found; for sin is cunning, and men are apt to be deluded, and therefore I have shewed her wily waies, and prescribed means to prevent them, at which I hope none will be offended; but they that indulge themselves too much in the waies of sin, which are too many for me by my own strength to grapple with. Yet sin I hope is not come to that height, as any will therefore openly oppose a work that condemns it, although perchance they may mislike it, however strengthned with the assistance of that pure God, which hates the impure waies of sin: I have adventured to put it to the publick view, in hope that some may receive benefit, his blessing going along with the spirit of private Readers, for the which I shall daily pray. And for protection from the calumnies of the world, do humbly beg your your Lordships Patronage, for the which I shall be more deeply obliged to be a daily suiter to the throne of Grace, for the encrease of your honour and happiness: So prayes

My Lord,

Your honors most humbly devoted servant,

John Noble.

To the Right Worſhipful, the Bailiffs, and the Aldermen, and the reſt of his Pariſhioners of *Eaſt-Retford.*

THeſe Sermons I preſent to the whole Nation, but in more ſpecial manner to you that are my peculiar charge, amongſt whom they have been preached, and perchance forgotten; and therefore to help your memories, I now deliver them in writing, that you may keep them by you, and read them over, and over again, as you have occaſion, beſeeching you in the bowels of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to lay them to heart, and to practiſe them in your lives and converſations. They may be a means to kill your ſin, and it would be the joy of my heart to ſee that decay amongſt you, to which end my endeavours and prayers ſhall not be wanting: but I muſt tell you alſo, that you muſt endeavour as much as in you lies to prevent all temptations to ſin both inward and outward, according to theſe rules which by the help of God I have ſet before you out of his holy Word tells me, That he which converteth the ſinner from the
James 5. 20. error of his way, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and hide a multitude of ſins. The practiſing of ſuch rules as theſe, I take to be the ready way to convert a ſinner from the error of his way; and if I can work but upon one, there is a reward promiſed to me: O let it be ſome one, or many of you, and then there will be a good accompt of my eleven years pains amongſt you: yet I read, That *Paul* may plant, and *Apollos* may water, but the Lord giveth the encreaſe; to him then let us fly for his bleſſing, that he may enable me to teach ſound doctrine to you, and to walk before you in the waies of righteouſneſs, and that he may enable you to follow, ſo as at the great day, I may deliver you up to the great ſhepheard, that ſhall place you and me amongſt the ſheep on his right hand,
Math. 25. 34. and pronounce that gracious ſentence unto us, Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *So prayes*

Your faithful Miniſter in Jeſus Chriſt

John Noble.

To the READER.

THe care of thy conſcience, not the flattering thee in thy opinion, hath invited me to this Task, the carrying on of the great deſign for the ſalvation of mens ſouls, not the carrying on of any worldly deſign for the pampering of their bodies, or pleaſing their humours; nor to pleaſe, or cry up any partie in this too much divided and even diſtracted Church and Common-wealth; but waving all ſides, and contentions, to inſtruct thy ſoul in the waies of righteouſneſs; ſo that if thou uſeſt Religion, or reads Sermons for no other end beſides Gods glory and thine own ſalvation by his bleſſing; here thou maiſt find inſtruction: for I fight againſt that only which is the common enemy, Sin, being the cauſe of all miſery, either to private men, or publick Nations; other things may be blamed, but that is the true fountain, and therefore if we could dam up this Spring, we might have happineſs upon earth, and a ready way unto the joyes of heaven; our natural corruption is a great hinderance, and our more willingneſs to obey the luſts of nature, then the precepts of grace makes it very hard, at difficilia quæ pulchra, Thoſe things that are moſt glorious, are attained with the greateſt difficulty. The Apoſtle tels us, That our life is a Warfare, and therefore let every Chriſtian Souldier fight ſtoutly againſt the temptations of the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil; as long as we may fight there's hope of overcoming, if we yeeld once we are condemned to death and ſlavery. To this end here I have propoſed to thy view the Conception and birth of Sin, which is our greateſt & moſt dangerous enemy, ſhewing both the outward and the inward cauſes of it, how by nature we are apt to fall, and be overcome thereby, and how by grace we may be able to ſtand and fight, exhorting all the true ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt to fight manfully under his Banner, and we may do it with a good faith, ſince

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our Captain hath already overcome all the powers of sin, and is ready to assemble them with weapons that are willing to fight: Lastly, that our temptation is so strong, and the waies of sin so cunning, as we had need to be watchful continually. This I have delivered briefly, lest I should tire the patience of any Reader, and in such a stile, as I hope the learned need not despise, the ignorant may understand, and all by the blessing of God receive profit. The Doctrine I take to be seasonable, in regard of the calamities, which for a long time have hung over this Nation, which if I could see a right operation of, to the decreasing of sin, I could confidently pronounce an end unto: but so long as this miserable weed flourisheth, and I fear I may say encreases, our misery and danger will encrease also. The means to prevent it lies something in every particular man, by striving to overcome his own sin, his own temptations and lusts; let every man sweep his own door, and the whole street will be clean; let every man mend one, and we shall quickly be a good Nation: I exhort him to do his endeavour, and to pray to God for his grace, for the good of thine own soul, advising thee to read, and practise the Rules which are here prescribed, and if thou receivest any benefit thereby, give God the glory, and remember in thy prayers

The unworthy Author

JOHN NOBLE.

JAMES

JAMES 1. 15.

Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin.

THe Jews after they had crucified the Lord of life as a juſt puniſhment, were diſperſed, and ſcattered abroad over the face of the earth, ſuffering many kinds of afflictions and miſeries which are ordinarily incident unto men that are driven from home: to comfort them in which ſtate, their countriman St *James* writ this Epiſtle to them, as appears at the firſt verſe, *James a ſervant of God, and of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the twelve tribes which are ſcattered abroad, greeting.* This ſcattering abroad, and afflictions thereupon, might tempt them to deſpair, and other ſins, and to have a wrong conceit of God in the point of ſin and affliction, and therefore he takes paines to rectifie their judgements, and to bring them to a right conceipt of God in all caſes to aſcribe glory to him, and to take comfort to themſelves; and therefore his Epiſtle conſiſting chiefly on admonitions, he begins with ſuch a one as in ſuch a caſe did moſt concern them, adviſing them to take comfort in afflictions, and rejoyce in temptations, as it is at the 2d. verſe, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; nay he goes ſo far in the 12th verſe, as he pronounces a bleſſing to them that endure temptation, he intimates that God is both the Author, and the rewarder of them, *Bleſſed* (ſaith he) *is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tryed, he ſhall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.* The Apoſtle thus having comforted them in their miſeries, and given them an Antidote againſt deſpair in their temptations, by affirming and proving that God was the Author of them, leſt upon this ground they ſhould fall into a worſe error, and think God to be the Author of ſin, he preſently prevents it with another admonition, immediately following in the 13th verſe, *Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God.*

Now

Now some men here may think the Apostle contradicts himself, since he pronounces a blessing to them that endure temptation, and intimates that God is the Author of them, and yet gives them a caveat not to say in their temptations, they were tempted of God; for the reconciling of which doubt, know that there be diverse kind of temptation: Some be outward, to wit, Afflictions, or Persecutions, either in Body, Soul, or Goods, such as the dispersed tribes of the Jews did suffer, when St *James* sent them this Epistle; and these are to a good end, for God is the Author of them, and inflicts them upon his people to exercise their patience, and try their faith; in this sence he is said to tempt *Abraham* in the 22 Chap. of *Genesis*, at the first verse, and so following, when he commanded him to offer up his onely Son *Isaac* whom he loved, and may be daily said to tempt us, when he sends any cross upon us for the tryal of our faith, and of these temptations the Apostle speaks unto the 13th verse, But then he comes to the inward temptations, such as provoke us to sin, and therefore to prevent blasphemy, he both affirms and proves, that God was not the Author of such temptations; and his caveat here, that no man should say he was tempted of God, was very necessary: for mankind is very prone to excuse, and willing to lay their faults upon others, and then do seem to be most freed from their sins, when they can impute the fault to God, either for tempting them, or at least suffering them to be tempted, and not affording them his grace, and power to withstand them. Such blasphemous men who excuse their sins by blaming God, our Apostle here doth reprehend, and convince, saying, as it follows in the same verse, *That God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* God is of so pure, and so good a nature, as he cannot desire evil, or be tempted with it, and therefore our Apostle might constantly affirm he would not tempt any man to that he neither had will, nor power to be himself. And this was a strong proof, for therefore doth the Devil tempt us to sin, because he doth wholly burn with the lust of sin: now God as in himself he neither hath the power, nor desire to sin, so neither can he be the Author of our sin.

But then some will say, Where comes our sin? and what's the cause of it? to speak properly, sin cannot be said to have any cause, because it is a meer privation, it hath no being, but

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that which comes neerest to the nature of a cause, and figuratively may be said to be the cause of sin: our Apostle here sets down, and in what order, and by what degrees it is conceived and brought forth amongst us; *But every man* (saith he in the next verse) *is tempted*, to wit to sin, *when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*; so that we may conclude, and determine, that temptation as it is a tryal of our faith and patience may come from God; but temptation as it is a provocation unto sin, comes from our selves: God doth not cause our sin, but our understanding and other faculties of the soul which he hath bestowed upon us, to be the direction of godliness to us; these our corrupted minds, drawn away with the pleasures of the world, and enticed with lust against the sway of reason, and instruction of God turns contrary to their right use, and consequently to our destruction. In us then is the seed of sin, to wit, our lust, which causeth in us an inepitude to do any thing that's good, and a ready inclination to any evil: and therefore it is emphatically spoken, That every man is tempted, when he is drawn away *of his own lust, and enticed, and then*, as it immediately follows in the words of my Text, *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.*

In which words our Apostle doth not onely simply affirm what's the cause of sin, but he proves it, and shews by degrees what's the beginning, progress, and manner of bringing forth our sin, and makes a Demonstration of it by a similitude, that we should the better understand his meaning: for similitudes in holy Scripture are generally very pithy, and express things more fully and feelingly to humane sense. The similitude which he uses in this place, he takes from a Childe-bearing-woman, as appears by these words of *conceiving and bringing forth*, using the same phrase in producing this ugly monster sin, as if he had spoken of a more natural and lawful birth, so that my Text is a description of the procreation of sin, shewing by what degrees it is produced, of what parents, and by what means, all which the division of my text will shew you plainly: I will here therefore cease to speak of it in general, and come to the gathering and handling of the several parts, which I take to be four.

1. *Parturiens.* 2. *Parturiendi modus.* 3. *Parturitio.* 4 *Partus.*

1. The breeder, lust.

2. The manner of her breeding, and that is by conception when lust hath conceived.

3. The Delivery, It bringeth forth.

4. The Birth, or Fruit which by this engendring, and conceiving is brought forth, and that is sin; then, *When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.*

These parts I shall go over three waies. 1 By way of exposition, to shew the meaning of the words. 2. By way of Instruction, to shew such conclusions, or points of Doctrine as do plainly arise from them. 3. By way of Application, to shew the uses we are to make of such instructions. The words contain in them much matter: and the manner of this *Conception*, and *Birth* is not easily understood; and therefore I shall spend the more time about the exposition of the Text, although there be the less reserved for Doctrine, and Use: for when the words are duely explained, every man may easily teach, and apply unto himself. Of these in their order by Gods gracious assistance, beginning with the first, the breeder, *Lust*.

Lust is set down in my Text as a cause of sin, but our Apostle tells not what was the cause of lust, which certainly had a cause, and it is requisite that I should shew it: for when we know what was the cause of lust, we may easier discern both how it comes to be a cause of sin, and also what kind of lust our Apostle speaks of in this place: for we are not to think that lust was created in the heart of man, since the creation of the world was pure, and perfect, *God saw every thing that he made, and behold it was very good*; and man was the perfection of his creation, the chief of all his creatures in dignity, the holiest in conversation, happy man, who had dominion over all the creatures, who was framed according to the image of his Maker, with whom he had for a time, and might have enjoyed for ever an union both in holiness and in happiness.

Gen. 1. 31.

But that state was over-good, and not agreeable to the wretchedness of such a creature, at left such a wretched creature was not worthy of so glorious a state: for whileft he enjoyed this height of happiness, his Maker gave him onely one commandment to observe, and he with a wonderful kind of ingratitude, and rebellion, did transgress it. And in that first man were all

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men, all mankind in him included; all men whileſt he ſtood, enjoyed the height of happineſs, and all men by his tranſgreſſion fell into the depth of miſery, and therefore the Schooles determine, *Dum punitur aliquis pro peccato primi parentis, non punitur pro peccato alterius, ſed pro peccato ſuo*, That when puniſhment is inflicted upon any man for the ſin of his firſt parents, he is not puniſhed for anothers fault, but for his own; for we are not to conſider *Adam* as a private perſon, but as repreſenting the whole body of man-kind. Aquinas Queſt. 4. de Pecc. Orig. Art. 1.

Now as this firſt mans ſin was hainous, ſo likewiſe was his puniſhment grievous, the juſtice of God ſeverely puniſhing him both in body and ſoul, the very earth being curſed for his ſake, inſomuch that it ſhould not bring forth ſuch pleaſant fruits as before it did, but Thorns and Thiſtles: and thoſe fruits which it did afford, he ſhould not pertake of as he did before, in joy, and eaſe, but in ſorrow and toil. On the other ſide his ſoul was puniſhed with ſinful luſts, ſo that although in the ſtate of mans innocency his ſoul was pure, and holy, both deſirous and able to love the Lord his God with all the faculties thereof, and to be obedient to his holy laws; yet now that he had broken his Gods commandments, all was altred: That divine light which enlightned his underſtanding, was turned into a fearful darkneſs. That divine grace which gave him both power, and will to perform what was right in the ſight of the Lord his God, was now turned into inordinate luſts, which did not onely take away his ability of doing good, but alſo provoked him to any kind of ſin whatſoever; ſo that now he ſhould be wholly at enmity with his Maker, having his underſtanding darkned, his will perverſe, his heart rebellious, all his powers and faculties wholly corrupted with inordinate deſires, and ſinful luſts. This was the puniſhment of our firſt parents ſin, inflicted upon them, and all their poſterity, ſo that now there is in every man a ſeed of ſin, a luſt which entices him to every ſin; and this is the luſt our Apoſtle ſpeaks of, which I ſhall ſhew you anon to be the cauſe of ſin. Already you ſee how ſin was the cauſe of this luſt; theſe two monſters, Luſt and Sin, mutually begetting each other, ſtriving to undo poor man; and becauſe they will be ſure to be both within him, they each become the material cauſes of the other: like as we ſee in Ice and Water, Water congealed becomes

Ice, and Ice when it is melted again, returns to Water: ſo 'tis with ſin, and luſt, each being the cauſes of the other, our original ſin the cauſe of our luſt, our luſt the cauſe of our actual ſins.

Luſt then in my Text, is not taken onely for the ſenſual appetite of the fleſh, which entices a man to break the 7th Commandment, but tis taken in a larger ſence, not for any one kind of luſtful appetite, but for the fountain and root from whence all inclination and deſires do proceed, which may tempt us to any luſt or ſin whatſoever: and therefore St *Auſtin* ſaid *In toto*
Aug. l. 1. d. lib. Arbitrio. cb. 3 *malefaciendi genere libido dominatur*, Luſt is the chief Agent in all kind of ſinful actions. We may ſee likewiſe our luſt ſpoken of in this large ſence in many places of holy Scripture. St *Paul* in the 5th of the *Gal.* reckons up the works of the fleſh, affirming them to be *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Hereſies, Envyings, Murthers, Drunkenneſs, Revellings*, and ſuch like; St *Paul* affirms all theſe to be the works of the fleſh. Now there be many of them, as *Witchcraft, Murthers, Seditions, Hereſies*, and others, which cannot be reſtrained to the ſenſual appetite of the fleſh, the ſtrict ſence of luſt, but they are all hainous ſins, and therefore the Apoſtle concludes, That they all are the works of this fountain, and root of all ſin, Luſt: So St *Peter* affirms, *That the corruption that is in the world is through luſt*, which cannot be as tis taken in a ſtrict ſence, but as he takes it largely in my Text; not for any one kind of evil deſires, but for the fountain and root of all ſinful appetites By luſt then here is meant, That ſeed of ſin which was left in our minds by the fall of our firſt Parents, being an hereditary corruption of our nature, ſpread abroad into all our parts of the body, and faculties of the ſoul, which makes us guilty of Gods wrath, and liable to his puniſhments, by breeding in us the ſinful works of the fleſh. And thus having unfolded unto you what we are to underſtand by luſt, I will leave it for a time, for the effect of it I muſt ſhew by degrees, as I proceed in the explanation of my other parts, the next of which I find to be the maner of her breeding, to wit, by conception, when luſt hath conceived.

Gal. 5. 19 20. 21.

2 Pet. 1. 4

2d Part. *This luſt conceives*, which by it ſelf it cannot, for conception

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is not cauſed by one Agent alone, but neceſſarily includes the acts of two, and where then ſhall we find a fit companion for her? what can we think bad enough to engender with this beaſtly luſt? *Origen* would have it to be the Devil, ſaying, *Quod improbi hominis anima diabolum maritum habet, ex quo ejuſmodi edis ſobolem, & conjunctio animæ noſtræ fuit primo cum malo viro, & marito peſſimo, diabolo.* A wicked mans ſoul (ſaith he) is firſt joyned to a bad man, and after married to a worſe Devil, *out of which uncleen matrimony proceeds the filthy and pollnted iſſue of ſin.* *Francis Georgius* in his Problems upon holy Scripture, ſeconds him in this opinion, ſaying *Sicut Deus ſeminat ſemen ſuum, &c. As God ſowes his ſeed in his field,* to wit, *His holy word*; ſo the Devil imitating him in the ſame act, although with contrary purpoſe, *ſowes his tares amongſt Gods wheat, his loathſome and deadly ſeed of luſt, amongſt the pure ſeed of Gods holy word:* ſo did he to our firſt Parents, repreſenting the whole Species of mankind, after God had placed them in *Paradiſe*, and given them one onely prohibition not to taſt of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: he comes to them by ſuggeſtion, and firſt ſeducing the woman, and by her means the man, made them both eat of the forbidden fruit, and die: and this hath alwaies been his practiſe, and ſtill is, *As a roaring Lion walketh he about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

Homil. 13 in Joſuen.

Problem. 456.

1 Pet. 5 8.

Divers others there be of opinion, that ſin is produced of the Devil, as Father thereof ſowing his ſeed, and our luſt as a Mother conſenting, and receiving it. But the Devil can not be the party meant in my Text, that conceives together with our luſt, for he is not enemy bad enough to us to do us this ill office, for although he be a ſore enemy, and endeavours by all means poſſible that lies in him, to ſeduce us from every good work, and tempt us to all kind of ſin, as appears by many places of holy Scripture, yet he hath not the power to do it; God hath limited and bounded his power, not to go any further then his Commiſſion. This appears unto us in the firſt and ſecond of the ſixth of *Job*, where tis ſhewed, that the Devil could not tempt *Job* to any ſin, until that God had given him leave. Nay, tis ſhewed in the Goſpel, that the Devils had not power to enter into a heard of *Swine*, until that

Mat. 8 31.

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our Saviour bad them go. Well therefore ſaid *Gregory* the great, *A ſeipſo voluntatem dæmon habet, ſed a domino poteſtatem, quod enim ipſe facere iniquè appetit, Deus fieri non injuſtè permittit.* The *Devils will* (ſaith he) *to tempt us, comes from himſelf, but his power from God; for that which he deſires to do wickedly, God will not ſuffer to be done unjuſtly.* Thus you ſee the Devil to be a cruel enemy to us, but I muſt find a worſe; for (as I ſaid before) he cannot be the party meant in my Text, that conceives together with our luſt: for although he be a cauſe of much ſin in us, yet he is onely an outward cauſe, his temptations are without us, and ſo more eaſie to be avoided. It muſt be then ſome Devil within us, worſe then that without us which is here meant, for Conception is a work within us, which cannot admit of any outward; but onely inward cauſes muſt be Agents in it. What is it then?

Lib. 2. Moralium.

I anſwer, That it is the will of man which is in this conception luſt's Husband: for as the learned Divines which were lately appointed, and imployed to ſet out Annotations upon all the Books of the old and new Teſtament, in their Expoſition of my Text do judiciouſly teach us: *Now luſt may then be ſaid to have conceived, when the will entertains thoſe evil motions with conſent and delight, which luſt hath ſtirred up.* Luſt indeed hath an inclination, and doth provoke a man to all kind of ſin, but by it ſelf alone it cannot conceive, and therefore it muſt expect the help of ſome other; now when it is thus prone, and ready to entertain any ſin, the will of man by conſenting unto it, makes the act of ſin compleat, which before was imperfect, and ſo by joyning the conſent of the will to the proneneſs of luſt, is cauſed this Conception. It is made then within us, in the heart and ſoul of a man, the will being the great agent in this naughty buſineſs.

Annotat. in locum

We may gather light from other places of holy Scripture, to confirm this expoſition of my Text; for obſerve I pray you, what Doctrine our bleſſed Saviour delivers in the Goſpel, *There is nothing from without a man that entring into him, can defile him; but the things which come out of him, thoſe are they that defile the man,* as it is at the 21. and 22. verſes, *From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil Thoughts, Adulteries, Fornications, Murders, Thefts, Covetouſneſs, Wickedneſs,*

Mark. 7. 15, vers. 21. 22.

neſs, Deceit, Laſciviouſneſs, an evil Eye, Blaſphemy, Pride, Fooliſhneſs: the heart is the ſeat of the will, what the heart enclines us unto, that we will; and from *within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, &c.* Here is almoſt all ſins particularly named, as it follows at the 23. ver. *All theſe evil things come from within, and defile the man.* So *Ezek.* 33. 11. See how the Lord by his Prophet reaſons with the people, *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil waies, for why will ye die O houſe of Iſrael? your will brings evil waies upon you*; from which you muſt turn; your will brings death upon you, *Why will ye die?* Why do you ſuffer your will to conſent with your luſt to bring ſin and death upon you? And thus our bleſſed Saviour bemoans his people, and city of *Jeruſalem. O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them which are ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not?* a great Emphaſis is in theſe words, *and ye would not*, ſo that the killing of *the Prophets, the ſtoning*, or any other way abuſing of the Miniſters of God which are ſent unto them, the refuſing to be gathered under his wings, to be gathered into the Church and Congregation of Chriſt, ſo as we may ſay, that the refuſing of the grace of God when it is offered, and the yeelding to the temptations of ſin when they are offered, is from the perverſneſs and corruption of our will.

23. Ezek. 33. 11. Mat. 23. 37.

How far the will of man may help us in the doing of that which is good, hath been a great and a nice diſpute in the Churches of Chriſtendom, and upon it many dangerous errors grown: but they are without the compaſs of my Text, all that it leads me to being to ſhew the freedom, or rather the thraldom of our wills in that which is evill, and herein all Divines agree that it goes very far, that it conſents, and ſo *conceives with our luſt for the bringing forth of ſin.* Luſt may fitly be compared to *Materia prima*, the firſt matter whereof things are framed, which in it ſelf is imperfect, and without form, but it is ready to receive any form, and deſirous to be informed; ſo luſt in a man is imperfect, it is without the form or ſhape of any actual ſin, but it is fit and ready to receive all forms, and both deſirous, and provoking to all ſins,

and

and then if the will of man consents unto it, it forms the lust, and makes that a voluntary actual sin, which before was but in *potentia*, onely in possibility, or at the most in a readiness so to be. Lust is the corruption of our sensual nature, but the Will is a free act of our souls, choosing, or refusing those things which are apprehended by our reason and understanding; but if contrary both to reason and understanding, our Will consents, & *conceives with lust*, then it loseth its own freedom, and hath no more power to choose what is good, but captivates it self, and all the rest of our faculties under the slavish yoak of sin.

In locum. To this purpose saies St *Austin*, *Noli consentire concupiscentiæ tuæ, non est unde concipiat nisi de te. Consensisti? quasi concubuisti in corde tuo.* Let not (saith he) *thy Will consent to thy lust, thy lust cannot conceive but by thy self, but if thou hast consented, thou hast already engendred sin in thy heart.* And the same Father notes, *That every man does conceive, and breed something in his heart*; but some do *conceive* with a regenerate spirit that which is good; others suffer their Will to conceive with their lust, and so breed all manner of sin; of these the *Psalmist* speaks, *Behold he travelleth with mischief, he hath* Psl. 7. 15. *conceived sorrow, and brought forth ungodliness*, according to the words of my Text, *Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin.* And thus I have shewed you the Parents of Sin, our Lust, and Will: I have shewed you how they engender, and *now lust having conceived*, labours to be delivered, which is my third part, and now comes in order to be spoken of, to wit, the delivery of lust, *it bringeth forth.*

3d Part. *It bringeth forth*, Of this I shall need to speak the less, because having already explained *Conception*, and the manner of it, it is more apparent what is meant by *bringing forth*: Bringing forth, is the acting of that which before was *conceived* within us, *conceiving* makes the act of sin compleat within us, bringing forth without us: this is the full consummation of the act, our lust enclines to sin, our will consents, both joyned they *conceive*; and if we go thus far that we are both enclinable, and consenting to sin, yet we think we are in want, and our minds are sick to bring forth, and longing until we have actually committed those hainous sins which we have already con-

conſented unto in our heart: and indeed after Conception the fruit may miſcarry, and ſo come to no perfection, but if it be once brought forth, all ſuch doubts are removed, the womb delivered, and the fruit received. Men in the bringing forth of that which is good, do oft miſcarry; for although a godly mans ſpirit hath an inclination to do that is good, and ſometimes prevails ſo far that his will conſents, and ſo conceives a godly purpoſe of doing good; yet ſuch is human frailty, as he is ſeldom able to bring it forth into act, for the allurements, and temptations af his luſt ariſing, and ſtrongly reſiſting his regenerate ſpirit, for the moſtpart overcome it, and ſo make the conception of his godly purpoſe to miſcarry. Thus was it with the people of *Judah*, for whom *Hezekiah* mourned, and rent his clothes, *The Children are come to the birth, and there is not ſtrength to bring forth.* *Judah* without doubt was much reformed by the raign of this good King over them, and by this Text it appears that they were not wholly given over to their luſts, that they had endeavoured to do good, and had *conceived* a godly purpoſe; yet when they came to the birth of it, they were found weak, and wanting the power of bringing forth. Iſa. 37 3.

But it is not ſo with ſin, *Quod concipunt impij id etiam parturiunt*, No wicked mans Conception doth miſcarry, for both the inclination of luſt, and conſent of the will, are neceſſary before there can be a Conception, and theſe two agreeing to bring forth ſin, man hath loſt all his freedom, and what power ſoever he had to reſtrain ſin, is now enthral'd, and wholly endeavouring to bring it forth. And if perchance there be ſome obſtacle hindring him, ſo that he cannot act his ſin in the ſame manner as he intended; nevertheleſs he hath brought forth his ſin, in the ſame hour that he gave over his will, and all the powers thereof to the conſent of his luſt, for ſins *Conception*, according to the words of our Saviour, *Mat.* 5. 28. But I ſay unto you, that *whoſoever looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath committed adultery already with her in his heart* *Committed adultery with her in his heart*; Here our Saviour makes the *conceiving*, and bringing forth of ſin to be both in the ſame inſtant; and ſo likewiſe doth St *James* in my Text, for although he make them two diſtinct acts, becauſe he would Mat. 5. 28

fully ſet down the birth of ſin, and the manner, and all the degrees of her generation, yet he affirms them to be both at the ſame time as appears by the firſt words of my Text, the particles, *then, when; then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth,* as if he had ſaid in the very inſtant, *that luſt hath conceived it bringeth forth:* well, what doth it bring forth? For anſwer to this Queſtion, I muſt come to my fourth part, to wit, the birth, or fruit, which by this engendring, and conceiving, is brought forth, and that is ſin; *Then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin.*

4. Part. *Sin,* loe here the Monſter that all this while hath been o'hatching, it is ſuch an aberration, and imperfection, as I can not perfectly give any definition of it, & it is unfit to be compared to any thing, becauſe it is worſe then every thing: but it muſt not be my task at this time ſo much to ſet down what it is, as to ſhew the birth of it from thoſe I have already made the parents of it, which I ſhall the eaſier do by ſetting down what kind of ſin our Apoſtle means here: for if he had ſpoken generally of any kind of ſin, he needed not to have made ſo many parents of it, ſince our luſt alone without the help of any other, is able to bring forth much ſin, as euil thoughts, wicked deſires, and ſuch like, which do creep into the minds of godly men againſt their wills, and yet are not excepted from the being of ſin; yea many times it is ſo powerful in man, as to make him commit ſome acts of ſin againſt his will. Thus was it with the Apoſtle S *Paul,* as he ſaith, *Rom. 7. 15. For that which I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I:* Here his will was free, it had not conſented to his luſt, and yet his luſt had ſo far prevailed, as by it ſelf to bring forth ſin. Such ſins as theſe that men commit through weakneſs rather then wilfulneſs, are not to be meant in my Text, for theſe you ſee are brought forth without *Conception*: but our Apoſtle here takes ſin in a ſtricter ſence. to wit, for a wilful breach of Gods *Commandments*; and how comes man ſo far blinded, as wilfully to break his Gods *Commandments*, ſince he knows fearful judgements denounced againſt the breakers, and infinite rewards promiſed to the obſervers of them? why, alas man is in a frail eſtate, encompaſſed about with a body of ſin, all his ſenſes be wholly corrupted with his luſt, and as St *Hierome* hath

Rom. 7. 15.

hath it, *Per quinque ſenſus quaſi per quaſdam feneſtras viticrum ad animam eſt introitus*; the five ſenſes are as five windows to give light and ſight to the ſoul of vitious objects, each ſence gives an occaſion, and opens a gap for the ſoul to let in ſin: the objects of our ſenſe are meerly things of this world, and ſuch as be bad as well as good, and it is drawn to the deſire of that with whoſe pleaſure it is taken; then the root of ſin that is in us, Luſt, propoſes ſin to our ſenſe, not in his own colours, for then he would appear ugly, but baited over with pleaſure, and ſeeming wonderful delightful, ſo that the ſenſe is preſently inthraled, and eagerly deſires to ſatisfie our luſt. But further, God hath given us underſtanding to govern our ſenſe, and a will to chooſe, or refuſe thoſe things which are apprehended by our underſtanding, and his object is peculiarly that which is good, either good in it ſelf, or at leaſt ſeeming ſo to us: but our luſt having overcome the ſenſe, goes further, and ſeeks to corrupt the will alſo, by propoſing to it pleaſurable objects, and ſeemingly good, although indeed very ill, and ſo our will is oft-times enſnared; and whereas it was given to be a curb to our licentious thoughts, and maſter of our luſt, it becomes his ſlave, for having conſented, *our luſt hath conceived, and then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin.* Thus this fearful Moniſter comes to be hatched: and thus I have gone over all the parts of my Text by way of Expoſition, the Doctrines, and the Uſes ariſing from thence, I ſhall reſerve for another Sermon, let us pray unto the Lord for a right underſtanding of that which hath been already delivered, and aſcribe

Libro 2. adv. riſus Jovinianum.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.

SERMON II.

JAMES I. 15

Then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin.

Of the outward cauſes of Sin, and the Doctrines, and Uſes of all.

THE Conception, and birth of Sin, I have already ſhewed, of what parents it is begotten, by what degrees, and by what means the Parents of it are both within us, the degrees and means are ſo inſenſible, as they cunningly ſteal upon us, the bringing of it forth is endleſs miſery. I ſhould be loath to leave man in ſuch a miſerable condition; and therefore ſo far as my Text will give leave, I ſhall preſcribe means to wind him out of it; let him ſee which way he muſt ſteer his courſe in this tempeſtuous ſtorm, and by what means he may arrive at a calm harbor at the laſt, and receive comfort and ſtrength in the mean time. His dangerous condition is by the fall of the firſt *Adam*, and the corruption that hath been intailed upon his nature ever ſince, his help muſt be by the riſing of the ſecond *Adam*, and the grace and ſtrength that comes by *Jeſus Chriſt*, which will be ſufficient to juſtifie, and ſanctifie us upon earth, and to glorifie us in the kingdom of heaven; yet ſo long as we carry about us this body of Clay, theſe enemies will be in us; and had we no ſtrength beſides our own, they would overcome us; but he that took our nature upon him, hath purified it; he that bore our infirmities, hath ſtrengthned us againſt them; he that overcame all our enemies, will arm us againſt their aſſaults; yet he requires that we ſhould fight, and ſtrive: Holy Scripture in divers places, calls our life a Warfare, and therefore ſo long as we live, we muſt fight, and not onely againſt *Fleſh and Blood*, but alſo againſt *Principalities and Powers*, ſaith the Apoſtle. *Fleſh* and *Blood* are our moſt dangerous enemies, becauſe they are within us, but we have enemies without us alſo, unto which ſome reſpect muſt be given in this ſpiritual combate, and ſo to make the Expoſition of my Text perfect: I muſt tell you that there be other things that may be thought to be the cauſes

Eph 6 12.

ses of sin, and indeed are in some sort, not the inward and essential causes, onely they be outward causes, such as are without us, and so more easie to be avoided; these I will name unto you, that if you be tempted with them at any time, you may have a care to resist, and fly from them: and these I shall draw unto three Heads.

1. The *Devil*, that great *Principality* and *Power*; yet he does not invade us openly, but secretly, he is a sore enemy to us, and very ready upon any occasion to tempt us; and although he cannot dive into the heart and secret thoughts of man, yet being a quick spirit he can discern all our actions, and judge by them how our heart stands affected, and our will enclined, and so as he sees occasion offer his suggestions and temptations to seduce us.

2. Men, wicked men, which tempt us to sin either by their words and bad advice, or by their deeds and ill example; and the greater Principality and Power they are in, the greater power they have over us, we are the easier led to follow their precept, or example; but although they be onely equal to us in place and power, or our inferiours, yet if we be taken with their company, and they be sinful, they will be apt to infect us; for it is the usual practise of the world, for men that are fallen into anykind of sin, not so much to study how to get out of it, as how to draw others into it, flattering and deluding themselves in any course although never so vain and sinful, which they see countenanced and followed by others; and although they be sensible of it to be sinful, yet willing, & endeavoring to make others like themselves.

3. The alluring objects of the world, which tempt us to lust after sin, these corrupt our sence, and move our will to desire that which will be our destruction, which these objects do not in themselves, for consider them simply in their nature, and so they are good, but they are cause of sin by accident, as we use them contrary to that end for which they were created: God in his Creation made us Lords over them, but we in our vile affections became their servants, and slaves, by giving them that which belongs to the Lord onely, to wit, the principal place in our affections, so they get a Principality and power over us; and we do any thing for the obtaining and inordinate using of them, although it be displeasing to the Lord; thus the *goodliness of the Babylonish Garment, the worth of the silver and gold which* Achan

ſaw amongſt the ſpoils, tempted him to *covet*, and *take* them contrary to the law of God, as we may ſee in the 7th Chap. of the book of *Joſhua*, at the 20. 21. ver. *And* Achan *anſwered* Joſhua *and ſaid, Indeed I have ſinned againſt the Lord God of Iſrael, and*
Joſh. 7. 20 21. *thus, and thus have I done. When I ſaw among the ſpoils a goodly Babyloniſh garment, and two hundred ſhekels of ſilver, and a wedge of gold of fifty ſhekels weight; then I coveted them, and took them.* When *Joſhua* went to deſtroy the City of *Jericho*, he was commanded by the Lord, and gave commandment over the camp of *Iſrael*, that no man ſhould meddle with any of the ſtuff, or ſpoil that was in the City, but as an accurſed thing it ſhould all be deſtroyed and burned with fire: now *Achan* ſeeing ſuch rich ſpoils that he might eaſily encompaſs, a goodly *Babyloniſh Garment, two hundred ſhekels of Silver, and a wedge of Gold*, he *coveted*, and *took them*, which brought a curſe upon himſelf, and all the Camp: it is very likely that when *Joſhua* gave the ſtrict command about medling with the ſpoil, *Achan* amongſt the reſt was willing to obey it; but when he ſaw theſe rich ſpoils, they were too great a temptation for him to withſtand, his luſt aroſe to covet them, and his will conſented to take them, this alluring object of the world giving the firſt occaſion; and thus daily doth the world ſeduce us, for to what ſin ſoever thou haſt an enclination, the world will fit thee with pleaſurable objects wherewithal to tempt thee.

And theſe are the outward cauſes of ſin, *At perditio tua ex te*
Hoſ 13 9. *Iſrael, O Iſrael thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf*, Hoſ. 13. 9. Conſider thy ſins, and thou ſhalt find theſe outward temptations to be onely occaſions of ſinning, and the true cauſes to be within thee; and if you pleaſe to examine particularly any voluntary actual ſin, you ſhall find that it proceeds from theſe two Parents of ſin ſet down in my Text, to wit, Mans corrupted luſt, and his conſenting will: and that you may the better ſee the truth of this, I will examine the breaches of the ten Commandments, and ſhew that our Luſt, and Will, are the Authors of them all; as firſt idolartry and falſe worſhip, that are forbidden in the firſt and ſecond Commandments; whence come they? but even from imbred luſting after ſtrange Gods, or a deſire to ſerve the creature better then the Creator. The third Commandment forbids ſwearing, which men prophane by a luſt they have to blaſpheme God, or to confirm their vain aſſertions by unlawful means.

The

The fourth commands us to ſanctifie Gods Sabboth; and whence is the breach of this? but either from a luſt we have to do other works on that day which are forbidden in this precept, and hinder us from diſcharging thoſe holy duties which we are enjoyned, or from our luſt ſo far corrupted, that although we be preſent at Gods holy Ordinances, our minds are with-drawn, and we do not perform them in that manner which we ought, and ſo the uſe of holy things becomes unholy to us. The fifth commands honor, and obedience to Parents, and Magiſtrates, but our luſt conteinns them, and ſo we break it. Murther comes from this root, to wit, a luſting after another mans blood. Adultery from luſt, as it is taken in the ſtricteſt ſence. Theft proceeds from an inward luſt to another mans goods. Bearing falſe witneſe from a luſt to defame and ſlander others. And the breach of the laſt Commandment, is from a luſting after any thing whatſoever, which it hath pleaſed God to beſtow upon ſome other. Thus you ſee, how by our imbred luſt we are ſtirred up to tranſgreſs all Gods holy laws; but luſt alone does not ſo fully break them, & therefore as though it could not ſin ſufficiently by it ſelf, it ſtrives to corrupt the will, and get his help to the producing of this ugly monſter Sin, and then if our will conſent, the act is perfect, that which before was but a provocation, is now a voluntary actual ſin; that which before did but entice man to ſin, *hath now conceived and brought forth ſin.* No man is free from this luſt, and every man hath a natural corruption which ſtirs him up to ſin, but God hath alſo given us reaſon to ſway it, and a will to domineer over it, to chooſe, or refuſe thoſe things which it offers unto us: but if we ſuffer our wills to be inthraled by it, if we will ſwear, if we will commit adultery, if we will ſteal, if we will bear falſe-witneſs, or the like, then we become open rebels, and wilfully break Gods holy laws, and *then our luſt hath conceived, and brought forth ſin.* Thus I have ſhewed you the outward, as well as the inward cauſes of ſin: and this I hope with Gods bleſſing, may ſuffice to be ſpoken of my Text by way of Expoſition: in the next place I am to go over it by way of inſtruction, to ſhew you ſuch Doctrines and Uſes as will ariſe from it; and conſidering all that hath been delivered in this, and the former Sermon, we may gather from it theſe five Concluſions, or points of Doctrine.

1. That God is not the Author of our ſin.

2. That

2. That we our ſelves are, wherein we muſt learn to diſtinguiſh betwixt the outward, and the inward cauſes; the outward cauſes are the Devil, the alluring objects of the world, and the company of wicked men, but the inward and eſſential cauſes are within us, to wit, our Luſt, and Will.

3. That ſince the fal of *Adam*, there is a luſt predominant in every man, which tempts him to all kind of ſin, and further alſo that his will is ſo far corrupted, as it is very enclinable to conſent.

4. That we muſt endeavor as much as in us lies, to reſiſt all temptations to ſin both outward and inward, although our corruption be ſuch, as we are not able to hinder this *Conception*, without the grace and aſſiſtance of almighty God.

5. And therefore fifthly, and laſtly, we are to uſe the means to get the grace of God, by our prayers unto him, to beſtow ſuch a bleſſing on us, by imploying our ſelves in the hearing, and meditating of his holy word, and all ſuch means as he hath appointed for the getting and encreaſing of his grace.

Theſe five Heads contain in them the ſum of the doctrinal part of this Text, and they are ſufficient to direct a man both in the ſpeculation and the practiſe of it, to direct him in his judgement, and keep him from erroneous opinions about theſe ſerious and weighty points, and to direct him in the courſe of his life, ſo as he may be the better able to reſiſt and overcome the temptations of ſin, and be kept freer from the incumbrances of ſo great and ſo dangerous an enemy. To handle theſe points of Doctrine by way of proof, and reaſon would be matter enough for many Sermons; and I am loath to be tedious, by inſiſting to long upon one ſubject: and therefore having partly ſhewn them already in the explication of my Text, I will now go over it by way of application, to ſhew the Uſes we are to make of ſuch inſtructions.

1. And herein firſt we may gather an uſe of reproof, this may ſerve to reprove all thoſe that go on careleſly, and ſecurely in a courſe of ſin, that eaſily yeeld to the temptations thereof, not ſtriving to reſiſt them by ſuch power, and means that God hath afforded to them.

2. We may gather an Uſe of Humiliation; this may ſerve to humble us all, even them that ſtrive moſt againſt their ſins, becauſe our corruption is ſuch as we are not able to overcome them.

3. We may gather an Uſe of Exhortation; this may ſerve to exhort us to uſe the means whereby we may; of this I ſhall chiefly in-

insist, and to the end I may go on punctually, and orderly therein, I will draw it into three Heads.

1. As first exhorting you not to excuse your sins, and lay the fault upon others, since they proceed from your selves.

2. Exhorting you, now you know the true causes of sin, and temptation, not to consent unto them, but endeavor as much as in you lies to resist them.

3. Exhorting you to pray unto the Lord for his grace, that by his special assistance you may overcome that which is above the weakness of your nature; of which in their order: First, exhorting you not to excuse your sins. I know excuses are rife, & men when they have actually broke Gods holy laws, are not so willing ingeniously to confess it, as to excuse themselves by blaming others. Thus when our first Parents had sinned, God comes to *Adam* to enquire whether he had eaten of the forbidden fruit or no, his conscience accused him so, as he could not absolutely deny it; yet he will have an excuse for it, putting it off to the woman, *Gen.*3. 12. *The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of* Gen. 3 12. *the tree, and I did eat*; wherein to justifie himself, he does not onely accuse the woman, but even the Lord also, for giving her unto him that was the occasion of his sin. Then God examines the woman, she could not deny it neither, yet she will excuse it, and lay the fault upon the Serpent, as it is in the next *v. The Serpent beguiled me, & I did eat.* Thus when *Samuel* came to reprove *Saul* for sparing the King of the *Amalekites*, and the best of the sheep, and the oxen, contrary to Gods command expressed in the 1. b. of *Sam.* the 15. *ch.* and the 3 *v. Now go, and smite* Amalek, *and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but* 1 Sam. 15. 3. *slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.* But as it follows at the 9th *v. Saul, and the people spared* 9. Agag, *and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not destroy them; but every thing that was vile, and refuse that they destroyed utterly.* Here s an expres breach of the command of the Lord, not only by the people, saith the Text, but also by *Saul* himself; and yet when *Samuel* came into the camp, *Saul* had the face to say unto him, as it is at the 13 *v. Blessed be thou of the Lord, I have per-* 13. *formed the commandment of the Lord*, and lay all the fault upon the people at the 15. *v. And* Saul *said, They have brought them* 15. *from the* Amalekites, *for the people spared the best of the sheep, and*

the oxen, and so forth; thus though *Saul* was apparently taken in a fault, so as he could not deny that the commandment of the Lord was disobeyed, yet he will excuse himself, & blame the people.

And thus I fear it stands with many at this time, who when they have sinned, are ready to say with *Eve*, The Devil tempted me, and I did sin, and so it is his fault, and not mine; or with *Adam*, *The woman deceived me*, and so I sinned, I alas was innocent, and had no desire to break thine holy laws; but I saw the woman, or any other pleasurable objects of the world, and they allured me to this sin, and so the fault is theirs, therefore I pray have me excused. Or with *Saul*, the people enticed me, and I did sin; I intended to serve God uprightly, but I met with bad company, such, and such wicked men, and so though I was unwilling, they drew me on to sin. These excuses (beloved) will not serve the turn, it is not fig-leaves will cover our nakednss, it is not any excuse will help; and if any man after sin committed, seek to lessen it by these, or the like means; let him assure himself that he makes it far greater, and less pardonable, for God is not like man, possible to be deceived with lies, *Mentiri Deo potes, Deum fallere non potes*, saith, St *Austin*, thou maist belie thy sins to God, but thou canst not deceive him so, and he gives the reason, *Quia novit Deus quid agas, intus te videt, intus te examinat, &c.* God knows all thy actions, he sees, and examines thy inward parts, he is a searcher of thy heart, and so knows that although thou hadst temptations from others, yet thy sin proceeded from thy self, and therefore if thou seekest to colour it by blaming others, thou art justly to be condemned, whereas if thou dost ingeniously confess it, seriously repent of it, and humbly crave pardon for it, no doubt but God of his abundant grace and mercy, will freely forgive, and accept thee into his favour.

Tract. 26. in Joh.

2 Vse of Exhortation.

My second Exhortation is, That now you know the true causes of sin, and temptation, you do not consent to them, but endeavor as much as in you lies to resist them. The causes of sin I shewed you to be either outward or inward, outward are such as be without us, namely the Devil, the alluring objects of the world, and the company of wicked men: these you must have a care to resist, which is easily done, if you prevent them in time, and suffer them to lay no hold of you, whereas if you open your heart unto them, and give them any entrance, they will be your overthrow; for the Devil is a slimy Serpent, and if he get but in his head,

head, he will quickly wind in his whole body after it, whereas if you resist him, he will flie from you. The world hath pleasurable objects of all sorts, to entice you to all kind of sins, and such as your senses will quickly be taken with, and wholly lust after if you give them leave, but if you curb them with your reason, and do not suffer your will to consent to them; you are easily withdrawn from them, and they cannot have power to seduce you. The company of bad men, is a strong temptation to sin, and what sin soever they intend to act, they will use such prevailing arguments, as they will draw you to it; and if you use their company, though but a little, you will be so entangled, as perchance you cannot easily get out again; but if you set your hearts against them, and not onely resist their temptations, but avoid their company, then they cannot entice you to any sin. This the wise man saw to be a strong temptation, and therefore he counsels his Son again and again, to beware of it, *Prov.* 1. 10. *My Son, if sinners entices thee, consent thou not:* Prov. 1. 10 and in the following verses, instancing in several kind of sins that others may allure us unto, either for profit, or pleasure, or revenge, saying, *Come with us*, and let us do such, and such things, though they promise to be confederates, and that he shall pertake of the gain; yet he charges his Son again at the 15. *v. My Son, walk not thou the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.* These are temptations to sin, and these we must beware of, which is easily done, for they are without us, so that we may both resist, and flie from them. 15.

At maximum negotium tecum habes, our greatest business is with our selves: we have enemies within us, and it is harder to resist their temptations: the parents of sin are both within us, and if we have not a special care over them they will engender; thy lust is wholly corrupt, and it will provoke thee to all kind of sin, but God hath given thee a will to rule over it; what then thou hast given to master thy lust, do not suffer to become his slave: when thy lust arises, do not by any means give thy consent unto it; for if thou givest thy consent, it hath *conceived; and then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: Ne pecces igitur plena voluntate, licet victa,* as the Schools distinguish: do not sin with a full and forward will, although thy will be sometimes so far overcome as to fall into sin: God will distinguish in his mercy and wisdom, betwixt sins of weakness, and sins of wilfulness; therefore do not give the head, the rains, the sway to thy lust; but strive to curb and subdue it, lest thou Senec.

beest withdrawn by thy lust; deny thy self unto it, do not follow it, it is unlawful, tis wanton, tis furious, tis proud, tis covetous, tis the root of all evil both toward God and Man: it is idolatrous, *Solomons* lust brought him to idolatry, over-threw all his wisdom, and made him to walk in the waies of folly; beware then in any case of embracing it with consent, lest after thou bewailest the fruit that will proceed from their conception. Take the advice of the Son of *Sirach, Go not after thy lusts, but refrain thy self from thine appetites.* Thus you see the parents of sin, and the means to hinder their *Conception*, which is by curbing our lust with the strength of our Will: our lust cannot *conceive* alone; so that if we keep our Will from his bondage, from consenting to him, we do not bring forth voluntarie actual sin. True it is that our lust is wholly corrupted, and our Will very enclinable to consent; so that it is a matter of great difficulty to keep our Will from consenting, and indeed without the help of God, not in the power of man; yet man must endeavour it, or else God will not help him, according to the observation of a late *Prelate* of our Church, in his *Commentary* upon the *Colossians*, *Homo Christianus debet tendere etiam ad illam perfectionem quam intelligit se in hac vita consequi non posse.* A Christian man is bound to endeavour that perfection which he knows in this life he cannot compass; *Nam mortificare, & cohibere omnes primos motus inordinatæ concupiscentiæ, nullus peccator unquam potuit.* For it it was never in the power of any sinner to kill, and restrain all the first motions of his inordinate lust: *Omnes tamen tenentur ad conatum*, and yet every man is bound to endeavor it; for that divine Commandment, *Non concupisces*, thou shalt not *covet*, or lust, stands firm, and binds all men continually; and in regard of their unability to shew perfect obedience unto it, St *Austin* speaks very worthily, *Lex dicendo non concupisces, id posuit, non quod hic valeamus, sed ad quod proficiendo tendamus.* The Law, in saying, *Thou shalt not Covet*, or Lust; doth not set down what we are able to do, but what we should endeavor, what we should aim at, and make the best proficiency in that we are able: in a word then, let us take a special care to resist each several temptation of our lust, and endeavor by all means possile, to keep our will from consenting to it; and what our weakness cannot attain unto, let us desire, & trust that the strength of God will perform for us: but this I may best shew unto you in my third and last Exhortation, wherein I am to exhort you to pray unto the Lord for his grace, that by his special assistance you may over-

Ecclus 18. 30.

Davenant Eps Sari in Col. 3. 5.

Aug Ep. 200. ad Asellicum

over-come that which is above the weakneſs of our nature.

You ſee in what a dangerous eſtate we are, how apt to *conceive, and bring forth ſin*, which is our greateſt and moſt dangerous enemie, indeed our onely enemy, nothing elſe ſets us at enmity and difference with our God; nothing elſe makes us miſerable either in this world, or in that which is to come: our onely remedy is in the grace and aſſiſtance of Jeſus Chriſt, & he hath appointed our prayers as a means whereby we may ſue unto him, and obtain his gracious aſſiſtance, this is well known unto men; yet for the better printing it in their minds, & encouraging them to this religious practiſe, I will briefly urge ſome texts of Scripture, both ſhewing our own weakneſs; and how by this means we may obtain ſome help and ſtrength, as 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God.* When the great *Apoſtle* ſaid, as you have heard, *Rom.* 7. 15. *For what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I:* What do you think muſt become of us? ſee him making greater confeſſion, even complaint, and cry in the ſame *ch.* at the 21 *v*, *I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is preſent with me; for I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I ſee another law in my members, warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*; there is the remedy in *Jeſus Chriſt*, and he ſhews us in the *Goſpel*, how he is our perfect remedy. *Joh.* 15. 5. *&c. I am the vine, ye are the branches, he that abideth in me, and I in him, the ſame bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not with me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.* If a branch be cut off from the vine, it withers, and becomes fuel to the fire, whileſt it remains in it, the Vine ſupplies it with life and ſtrength; this compariſon our bleſſed Saviour uſes to ſhew in what condition we are in, or without him in regard of our ſpiritual ſtrength, and therefore we may truly account our ſelves withered, and dead without him, but freſh and lively ſo long as we are united to him, *labiles qua ſumus Adami, ſtabiles qua gratia ſumus Chriſti*, apt to fall, as we are the Sons of *Adam*, able to ſtand as we are by grace the Sons of Chriſt.

3 Uſe of Exhortation.

2 Cor. 3. 5.

Rom. 7. 21. 22, 23, 24, 25.

Joh. 15. 5, 6, 7.

Thus I have ſhewed you the ſteps and degrees of our miſery, how apt we are to *conceive* and *bring forth ſin*; alſo the ſteps and degrees of our happineſs, how we may be able to overcome the temptations of it, how we may be freed from it, juſtified, and ſanctified in *Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*: yet in this ſtate alſo we are ſubject to many temptations, and therefore when our bleſſed Saviour upon earth taught his Diſciples to pray, in that prayer which he left unto them, and all poſteritie, as a pattern of prayer; one of the Petitions is,

Mat. 6. 13. *And lead us not into temptation:* and when he departed from his Diſciples, he gave admonition to them, and in them to us, that we

Mat. 26. 41 ſhould wateh and pray againſt it; *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak:* temptation is ſo ſtrong an enemy, as we ought not onely to *watch*, but alſo to pray againſt it; and not onely to keep us from ſin, but alſo for the obtaining, and rightly uſing of any ſpiritual bleſſings, or temporal, to beware of abuſing the things that belong unto another world, and thoſe that belong unto this alſo: the greateſt bleſſings that God beſtows upon his ſervants in this world, as Health, Strength, Liberty, Riches, Honour, and the like; every man hath ſuch a luſt about him to abuſe, as he may well pray unto the Lord, that he be not *led into temptation by them*; and that he may ſo uſe them, as to be able to give an accompt unto him that beſtowed them on him: we make vows and promiſes unto the Lord in our ſickneſs, weakneſs, impriſonment, poverty, low eſtate, which we forget in the times of health, ſtrength, liberty, riches, and honour; and when we flow and abound with theſe, our luſt and deſire to uſe them inordinately, luxuriouſly, proudly, covetouſly, or the like, doth ſo blind our eyes, as we cannot ſee to behave our ſelves worthily in any place. I judge no man, but leave every man to judge and examine his own heart; every man in a ſerious ſcrutinie of his conſcience, may find his own luſt beſt, although whileſt he gluts himſelf with the pleaſures thereof, he is ſo blinded as he cannot ſee it; but let him pray unto the Lord to open his eyes, and to guide him with his grace, and then his ſight will be ſo clear, as he may ſee the vanitie of his way, and forſake it; as he may ſee how to uſe aright all manner of bleſſings both ſpiritual and temporal, and not be led into temptation by them; the greater he hath received, the greater accompt he hath to make, and conſequently the greater care, and watching over his waies is requiſite; high places are accounted moſt ſlippery, but indeed in all places of this world,

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men are apt to ſlip into ſin, the poor, and the Priſoner, and the ſick, have their ſeveral temptations, to impatience, diſcontent, and ſometimes to deſpair; it is the grace of God that upholds us in any eſtate; and be it higher or lower, richer or poorer, as we fight & ſtrive againſt our luſt or as we yeeld and conſent unto it; ſo we are in a bleſſed or miſerable condition, one covetous, angry, or wanton luſt, yeelded unto *plena voluntate*, with a full and forward will, ſpoils all the rare endowments, and inward virtues, all the outward fortunes and glories which God enriches any man withal upon earth: and on the other ſide, if a man in that eſtate which God appoints him unto in this world, do ſtrive to curb his luſt, and fight againſt ſin as much as in him lies, although he may through infirmity be overcome, yet ſtill he is in a way to make new addreſſes to the throne of grace, and may be in a capability to receive ſuch grace as may ſtrengthen him better for the future ſo that in any eſtate he may overcome his temptation; but as I ſaid before, temptation is ſo ſtrong an enemy, and ſo many waies coming upon us, as we ought not onely to watch, but alſo to pray againſt it, and our bleſſed Saviour gives us good encouragement in the fore-named place, *Joh.* 15. 7. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye ſhall aſk what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you*; what bleſſing ye will, and how to uſe it. This is then the beſt concluſion, let us ſtrive to abide in him, let us give that reſpect to his holy words, and ſo ſtrive to keep them, as they may abide in us; let us ask his ſpecial grace and aſſiſtance againſt our manifold temptations: this will be a cruſhing of ſin in the Egge, a taking of *the children of Babylon, and daſhing them againſt the ſtones, a laying the axe to the root of the tree*: & theſe inſtructions may be a great help to a religious man in the practiſe of his whole life, bleſſed is he that can make uſe thereof; for the which bleſſing, let us now pray unto him that is the fountain of bleſſing.

Bleſſed Lord God, it hath pleaſed thee to ſhew us this day in what a weak condition we are, how apt to conceive and bring forth ſin, the parent of ſin being both within us, our Luſt, and Will, every man carrying about with him a ſeed of ſin, a luſt which entices him to every ſin, being an hereditary corruption of our nature,

ſpread

spread abroad into all our parts of the body, and faculties of the soul; so as our heart is naught, our will with all the powers thereof is wholly corrupt, and very enclinable to consent to any sin which our lust shall provoke unto. This corruption we drew from the loins of our first parents, our fathers have eaten of the sowre grapes, and the childrens teeth are set on edge; yet this we do not urge as an excuse for our sins, for we are all included in the person of Adam, *in him, as the Apostle saith,* We all have sinned; *so that* Rom. 5. 12 *by looking upon him, or our selves, we can see nothing but corruption, misery, and woe. Our comfort is, that the second* Adams *obedience satisfied for the first* Adams *disobedience: thy word which is thy self, teaches us,* That as by one mans disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. *O Lord, we pray thee, let us thy servants be in the number of those that shall be made righteous by the righteousness of thy dear Son, for our selves we have none; let his light shine into our hearts, and they will be enlightned; all the clouds of darkness, or ignorance, which sin had raised within us, will be dispelled; let us be partakers of his grace, and then we shall be justified, and sanctified indeed; the crookedness, and perverseness of our wills will be subject, and obedient unto thy blessed will, so as we shall not easily yeeld to the provocation of our lust, but strive daily to hinder the conception of sin, and endeavour to do all the good that we are able; for we know O Lord, that thou requirest at our hands, that we should daily strive and endeavour; teach us we humbly pray thee, to do our duty, and do thou in mercy accept thereof; help us with thy grace, and strengthen us in the inner man: and Lord grant that we may grow from strength to strength, and from grace to grace, until in the end we meet thee in thy glory, and that for the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord and onely Saviour, to whom with thee and the blessed spirit, one God and three Persons, we ascribe as is most due, all honor, and glory, and praise, from this time forth and evermore.* Amen.

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